

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 34

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 144

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 34—Relative to National Lupus Awareness Month.

[Filed with Secretary of State September 25, 2007.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

AJR 34, Price. National Lupus Awareness Month.

This measure would declare that the month of October 2007 be designated as “National Lupus Awareness Month,” and would encourage state and federal government entities to promote policies and programs that seek to reduce the incidence of lupus, and improve current methods of prevention, detection, treatment, and followup care for all Californians.

WHEREAS, Lupus is a serious, complex, and debilitating autoimmune disease that can cause inflammation and tissue damage to virtually any organ system in the body, including the skin, joints, other connective tissue, blood and blood vessels, heart, lungs, kidney, and brain; and

WHEREAS, It is estimated that approximately 1,500,000 to 2,000,000 Americans live with some form of lupus. Lupus typically affects women nine times more often than men, and 80 percent of newly diagnosed cases of lupus develop among women of child bearing age; and

WHEREAS, Lupus disproportionately affects women of color; being two to three times more common among African-Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and Native Americans, and is generally more prevalent in minority populations; a health disparity that remains unexplained. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the rate of lupus mortality has increased since the late 1970s and is higher among older African-American women; and

WHEREAS, There have been no new drugs approved by the federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) specifically for lupus in nearly 40 years, and, while current treatments for the disease can be effective, those treatments can lead to damaging side effects; and

WHEREAS, The pain and fatigue associated with lupus can threaten people’s ability to live independently and make it difficult to maintain employment and lead normal lives. One in five people diagnosed with lupus is disabled by the disease, and, as a consequence, receives support from government programs, including Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security Disability, and Supplemental Security Income; and

WHEREAS, The estimated average annual cost of medical treatment for an individual with lupus can range between \$10,000 and \$30,000; and

WHEREAS, For people who have the most serious form of lupus, medical costs can greatly exceed that amount, thus causing a significant economic, emotional, and social burden to families and society; and

WHEREAS, Many of the people with lupus suffer four or more years and visit three or more physicians before obtaining a diagnosis of lupus, and early diagnosis of, and commencement of treatment for, lupus can prevent or reduce serious organ damage, disability, and death; and

WHEREAS, Despite the magnitude of lupus and its impact on individuals, families, and health professionals, public understanding of lupus is very limited. Only one in five Americans can provide even basic information about lupus, and awareness of lupus is lowest among adults ages 18 to 34 years, the age group most likely to develop symptoms of lupus; and

WHEREAS, Lupus is a significant national health issue that deserves a comprehensive and coordinated response by federal and state governments with the involvement of health care providers, patients with lupus, and public health communities; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of California, jointly, That the month of October 2007 be designated as “National Lupus Awareness Month” and that the private sector and the state and federal governments are encouraged to promote policies and programs that seek to reduce the incidence of lupus, and improve current methods of prevention, detection, treatment, and followup care for all Californians; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the Majority Leader of the Senate, and to each Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the United States.